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DE RUEHMD #0568 0871456
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FM AMEMBASSY MADRID
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2168
INFO RUCNMEM/EU MEMBER STATES COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUEHTV/AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV PRIORITY 2412
RUEHSB/AMEMBASSY HARARE PRIORITY 0018
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C O N F I D E N T I A L MADRID 000568

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EUR/WE FOR GARY CLEMENTS AND ANGELA CERVETTI
EUR/ERA FOR PETER CHASE

E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/28/2017
TAGS: [EUN](#) [KPAL](#) [PREL](#) [XG](#) [IS](#) [IR](#) [ZI](#) [SP](#)
SUBJECT: SPANISH FM WILL ONLY ATTEND SECOND HALF OF GYMnich

REF: STATE 37792

Classified By: DCM Hugo Llorens for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (SBU) Poloff spoke with MFA Deputy Director General for Foreign Policy Carlos Fernandez-Arias on March 28 to discuss Spain's views in advance of the Gymnich. Fernandez-Arias said that Foreign Minister Moratinos would miss the first two sessions on the Balkans and the European Neighborhood Policy, as he is still traveling in Latin America with the King. That said, Fernandez-Arias predicted that the discussion on Kosovo would deal mainly with crafting a positive European approach to the Ahtisaari proposal and its implementation as an upcoming UNSC resolution, as well as with managing Russia's concerns. The European Neighborhood discussion would likely be very informal and focused on how the relationships will take shape between Europe and neighbors who will never join the EU - in North Africa, the Middle East and Eastern Europe. Topics would include what it means to be a neighbor to the EU and the difference between the EU neighborhood and EU expansion.

¶2. (C) On Iran, Fernandez-Arias said that there would be little room for strategic discussion given the ongoing crisis with the captured British sailors and marines. He expected that the Gymnich might make some sort of firmly worded statement of solidarity with the UK. He said that he spoke with British diplomats in Spain on March 27 and found that they were incensed. He thought that the timing of the capture was not a coincidence and was clearly an effort by Iran to stall for time. That said, he felt confident that they would be released unharmed.

¶3. (C) On the MEPP, Fernandez-Arias stuck to EU talking points - support Abbas, work with Fatah ministers (Finance and Foreign Affairs), provide an impulse to the process, and judge the NUG on its actions. However, he added that he could not really predict what FM Moratinos would say at the Gymnich, both because Moratinos is traveling and because he has taken a more personal and hands-on approach to the MEPP without always consulting with the Directorate General.

¶4. (C) Fernandez-Arias did not think there would be much discussion of Zimbabwe or the DRC, but he speculated that the Belgians might bring up the DRC. He noted that the incident with Iran appeared to have pushed Zimbabwe off the front burner for the UK; he suspected that the EU would address both the DRC and Zimbabwe in April.

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